

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
MAY 28, 1998 MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Review of April 23 meeting notes

No revisions were made to the April 23, CALFED OPS meeting notes.

Announcements

Art Hinojosa will no longer serve as scribe. The chairs will announce a new scribe at the next meeting.

NMFS will hold an additional hearing on the listing of spring, fall and late fall run Chinook on June 11, 6:00 PM at Half Moon Bay: Notice in the Federal Register.

The following handouts were provided at the meeting:

1. Revised Notice of Public Meeting, SWRCB, Whitney
2. Letter to Bay/Delta Hearings Service List, Transmittal of exhibits, SWRCB
3. Letter to *Save the Bay*, Ruling on Phase rescheduling, SWRCB, Whitney
4. SWP Operations Package, DWR, Spence
5. Temporary Barrier Status, DWR, Bachmann
6. Letter to NMFS, informal consultation for Steelhead, USBR, Burke
7. Federal Register, reopening comment period - Splittail, FWS, Vandenburg
8. Splittail graph comparing salvage to pumping, Hymanson
9. Vernalis Flow and Delta Pumping graph, USBR, Burke

Chinook Genetics Presentation - Dennis Hedgecock - UCD

Dr. Dennis Hedgecock, researcher from UC Bodega Marine Laboratory, presented the latest analyses and results on the Central Valley Chinook Genetics Project. The lab staff have completed the investigation of the Winter Run Baseline, and are confident the Baseline is composed of only Winter Run based on genetics. This involved incorporating three more genetics markers in the analysis. Dr. Hedgecock and staff are in the process of identifying and incorporating several more markers to enhance the distinguishing capabilities of the genetics analyses.

Completion of the Winter Run Baseline investigation allowed them to report revised Mixed Stock Analysis (MSA) and preliminary Individual Identification for Winter Chinook. As expected, the revised MSA results were very similar to the preliminary MSA results. The percentage of salvaged Winter Run based on

genetics within the Winter Chinook length range this season (8/97 through 3/98) was 41%, and within a few percentage points of the preliminary results.

The preliminary Individual Identification corroborated well with the MSA results. Twenty-two (39%) of the 57 individuals within the Winter Run length range were identified as Winter Chinook based on genetics. There were 5 (21%) more of the 23 individuals larger than the Winter Run length range, and 1 (0.17%) individual just smaller than the Winter Chinook length range among 588 individuals smaller than the Winter Chinook length range also identified as Winter Chinook based on genetics.

Dr. Hedgecock and staff, and DWR are working on applying MSA and Individual Identification analysis to prior years of SWP and CVP salvage data, and Delta Chinook monitoring data in order to provide a more comprehensive application of genetic analysis to the juvenile Winter Chinook population.

SWRCB

SWRCB provided three handouts describing the refined structuring of the Bay-Delta water rights hearings. The first four of eight phases were briefly mentioned:

- 1) Extension of Order WR 95-6
- 2) Responsibility of parties jointly proposing the San Joaquin River Agreement.
- 3) The Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement
- 4) Responsibility of parties jointly proposing the Sacramento, Mokelumne, Calaveras, Consumnes watershed flow-dependent objectives.

The deadline for submittal of phase 1 exhibits is June 1. Phase 1 of the hearing will begin July 1. The deadline for submittal of phase 2 exhibits has been extended to June 15 because the hearing for phase 2 has been delayed until the hearing for Phase 1 is complete. Phase 2 is estimated to begin no earlier than July 14. Exhibits that will be introduced during phases 3 and 4 must be received by June 20. Deadlines for other phases have yet to be announced. The responsibilities of water rights holders not discussed in phases 2 and 4 will be addressed in phase 8.

Revisions to chapters 5, 6, and 13 of the environmental impact report were issued May 27. Revisions include additional studies on the San Joaquin River Agreement and corrections to DWR's Alternative 5 modeling study. Comments on the revised chapters are due July 13.

CCWD filed a temporary urgency water right permit with SWRCB to allow diversion to Los Vaqueros Reservoir when excess conditions exist in the Delta between June 30 and October 31 of this year. The current water right only allows for diversions from November 1 through June 30. The public notice will be given sometime during the week ending June 5 followed by a 15-day period to file objections.

SWRCB is reviewing a petition to transfer water between Tulare Lake water users and Westlands Water District. This petition will be noticed towards the latter part of the week ending June 5 and will also allow for a 15-day filing deadline.

Operations

CVP/SWP Operations Status: DWR resumed SWP Delta operations on May 16. Pumping at Banks is expected to be between 2000 and 3000 cfs for the foreseeable future. Banks pumping is low because flood water is being diverted into the California Aqueduct at the Kern River Intertie. The 1300 cfs that is being brought in is being used to help meet SWP demands. There are no releases currently from the SWP share of San Luis Reservoir. The SWP share remains full at this time. The Delta is forecasted to be in balanced conditions beginning some time in July. All SWP reservoirs should fill from expected runoff.

UPDATE: The Delta is no longer forecasted to be in balanced conditions this summer.

This May will be one of the coolest on record. Current forecasts indicate that snowmelt runoff will occur later in the season. CVP demands are low and no water is being discharged from Friant. Vernallis flow is expected to remain high until mid-July when it should drop to about 4,000 to 5,000 cfs. It should remain at this level until reservoir flood storage evacuation is needed again in late August or September. Lake Shasta will fill in the next few days and all other CVP reservoirs are filled to allowable capacity. Trinity and Keswick releases increased and bypass flows at Tisdale and Colusa are resuming.

Delta Operations Criteria: Excess conditions continue in the Delta. There are no foreseeable problems meeting any standards. Currently eight days have accumulated for the 14-day requirement for Delta Cross Channel Gate closure for the May 15 - June 15. Current hydrologic forecasts suggest eight X2 days will be needed at Port Chicago for June.

Temporary Barriers: The three agricultural barriers have yet to be installed due to continued high flow on the San Joaquin River. The barriers will be installed

when Vernalis flow is less than 5000 cfs. SDWA feels the barriers will be needed even if they are operational for a limited period.

DWR has awarded a contract to install 12 fish screens on Sherman Island agricultural diversions along the San Joaquin River. It is anticipated that 9 screens will be installed and operational by April 1, 1999, with the remaining 3 screens installed and operational by April 1, 2000.

DWR is pursuing a design modification to the Head of Old River barrier to include the installation of six fully operable culverts to ensure that local diverters in the SDWA have adequate water supply. DWR is working with FWS, DFG, USACE and SDWA to develop an acceptable operations and monitoring plan.

Fishery Status

Delta Smelt: During Survey 3, conducted May 4 - 9, delta smelt were found in the lower San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers, Franks Tract and Mare Island with the highest densities found in the Napa River. The water temperatures are as much as 5 degrees Celsius cooler than normal which is causing later spawning than in previous years. Salvage of delta smelt may increase in July and August, but it is not expected to be of concern because of the wide geographical distribution primarily west of the Delta as seen from Survey 4, performed May 18 - 23.

ACTION ITEM: For the next CALFED OPS meeting, DAT will present its recommendation on RTM beyond June 30.

Chinook Salmon: Winter-run size salmon moved out early this year. None have been salvaged at the facilities since early April and very few have been found in the FWS surveys. Adults are moving past Red Bluff Diversion Dam, but because of high river flow they are having difficulty finding the ladders. The diversion dam gates are currently open and NMFS believes that 90% of the winter-run will make their way past if the gates remain open for another ten days. It appears the USBR is capable of controlling temperatures to the downstream end of Red Bluff Lake this year. Aerial photo surveys have been successful in finding numerous redds near Redding. A carcass survey is scheduled but may prove difficult with the high flows. The resulting escapement estimate will be subject to increased uncertainty, although this may be one of the best years for winter-run return.

Salvage of fall-run and spring-run size salmon, as defined by the Delta Model curves, continues at a steady rate at the facilities.

Steelhead: The Central Valley Steelhead was listed as threatened under the federal ESA by NMFS on March 18, 1998. NMFS has begun informal consultations with USBR and DWR on possible CVP and SWP impacts to steelhead. The first objective is to identify any immediate concerns, although none are expected. The primary focus is to ascertain the long term problems. NMFS will consider a stakeholder's request for public disclosure of steelhead consultation. An ESA regulation under section 4(d) will be issued this summer that will prohibit take of steelhead, but will allow some exemptions for studies. Although, the SWP and CVP are not prohibited on take at this time, after the 4(d) rule is issued, SWP and CVP will need authorization for take, which will be provided through a biological opinion. Steelhead is of concern in Clear Creek, the Sacramento, American, Feather, and Stanislaus rivers, and in the Delta. Temperature control on each tributary is seen as the critical issue. Steelhead salvage data are available at the facilities although there are no specific fish screen efficiencies that apply to steelhead, so accurate estimation of loss is difficult. Approximately six to eight months are needed to complete a biological assessment and then follow with formal consultations.

Splittail: On May 18 the Federal Register announced that FWS is reopening the comment period for Sacramento splittail until July 17, 1998. All comments should be sent to the Sacramento office Field Supervisor or Mike Thabault. No specific date has been set for a decision on the listing.

Sampling indicates this is a very good recruitment year for Sacramento splittail. Ongoing sampling has detected young-of-year splittail in both Butte Creek and the low flow channel of the Feather River. Splittail have been captured in routine beach seining conducted by the FWS along the Sacramento River. They have been the most abundant species caught in the Yolo Bypass since late April and have also been caught in variable numbers at all RTM stations including Chipps Island in May. Catch at Mossdale has ranged in the tens to hundreds of YOY over much of May, but increased dramatically on May 26 when nearly 1,200 YOY were caught in ten tows.

The relatively high rate of salvage at the facilities is not necessarily tied to the rate of pumping but rather to the profusion of splittail this year. Comparison to 1995, (another exceptional splittail recruitment year), reveals that recent salvage rates are slightly higher in 1998 than for the same period in 1995. Although, salvage numbers in 1995 were higher in June than in May.

CVPIA-AFRP

Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan: The amount of accretions experienced this year during the pulse flow period, (April 15 through May 15), are extraordinary. The San Joaquin River flows ranged from 25,000 to 18,000 cfs

during the pulse flow period. Exports were almost exclusively from the CVP. Low demand has resulted in a modest ramping up of exports following the pulse flow period.

Joint Point of Diversion: The No Name Group has assembled three subgroups to try and reach a consensus on the issues involved with joint point of diversion.

The Operations Subgroup will be looking at modeling make-up water to recover impacts for the Delta AFRP actions. It will also be looking at barrier and mitigation issues connected with JPD Alternative 5 of the Draft EIR/EIS. A meeting time has not been announced.

The Fisheries Subgroup is looking at impacts to fish and has scheduled a meeting for June 4.

The third subgroup is taking a look at the sharing of benefits. No progress was reported at the CALFED Ops Group meeting.

CVPIA Operations Plan: DOI is preparing a response to DWR's May 16 letter and proposed plan for implementation of AFRP Delta Actions.

New Agenda Items for the Next Meeting...June 25

DAT recommendation on RTM beyond June 30, (Sweetnam)